

BiNet USA Participates In Historic DC Gathering

by Ron Owen

On September 25 and 26, 1997 over thirty leaders of Bi, Trans, Lesbian and Gay national organizations met in Washington, DC in an historic first ever meeting. Never before have so many of the advocacy groups, that collectively might be called "The Movement", gotten together to discuss common issues. The National Policy Roundtable was organized by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and facilitated by its former Director, Urvashi Vaid.

As BiNet USA's representative, it was really an honor to be able to meet people I'd only read about, to network with other people that shared a deep passion for change, and to create BiVisibility on another level. The case for BiNet USA became clearer as we were the only national bi group represented alongside gay and lesbian and trans groups including HRC, ACT UP, National Association of People with AIDS, National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum, National Youth Advocacy Coalition, Service Members Legal Defense Network, Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, PFLAG, Intersexed Society of North America, Lambda Legal Defense Fund, National Lesbian & Gay Journalist Association, National Latino Lesbian & Gay Organization (LLEGO), FTM International, GenderPAC, AIDS Action Coalition and others.

Our agenda for the first meeting was focused on establishing relationships and understanding between the groups. Discussions centered on what each organization's mission is and what are the driving principles and ideas. There was also a panel discussion that assessed our national movements and strategies. I found it interesting to note that the radical

right's sound bite on the "gay agenda" is clearly a ploy to put fear in people. The organizations represented, including BiNet USA, have a multitude of agenda items that when taken together create a true rainbow; but not necessarily one coherent policy.

So while the intention was not to create a single national agenda it was clear that by coming together and sharing we could begin to see new ways to support each other. I was very excited to feel hopeful, to see the clear possibility of synergy; creating more than the sum of our individual efforts.

One example was a proposal from GenderPAC to merge our lobbying efforts into a National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Lobbying Day. The gender groups have worked with BiNet USA in the past during National Gender and Bi lobbying day. The proposal to the Roundtable was to unite in our lobbying efforts either annually or biannually.

Urvashi also shared with us a proposal to the Federation of Statewide GLBT Organizations to create a 50 state march for GLBT civil rights. This event is conceived as an "educational demon-

stration by the gay community — intended to inform both gay and straight communities of critical civil rights issues at the state level — and as a lobbying effort — intended to promote specific issues of gay and lesbian civil rights to legislators in every state." Having participated in marches on Washington, the vision I got from this proposal was very stimulating, and, yes, we did point out the lack of inclusiveness in the quote.

I also saw clearly how critical it is for you, the members of BiNet USA, to respond to the Bi Policy Poll (see newsletter insert) so that we can better articulate your interests and prioritize our efforts at the national and state level. Imagine how exciting it would be if every state in the union had a bi or several bi groups involved with its statewide federation! I think it is a worthy goal. I would like to hear back from you if we can make a commitment to support and nurture the growth of local/state bi groups in every state by the year 2000!!

The next meeting of the National Policy Roundtable will be on March 12 & 13, 1998 so let's have your responses back by February 1st, our next *BiNet News* deadline!

BiNet USA at Gill Foundation Roundtable

By Stephanie Berger with assistance by The Gill Foundation

BiNet USA was one of approximately twenty G/L/B/T organizations invited to participate in The Gill Foundation's Technical Assistance Roundtable held in August in Lansdowne, VA. This roundtable meeting was an opportunity for technical assistance (TA) providers from a range of national organizations to meet each other, make personal connections and brainstorm about getting better at sharing and providing technical assistance to our communities and with each other. Much practical information was learned at this event.

(GILL continued on page 19)

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Thanks

to the music!

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BiNet USA's Mission

is to collect and distribute information regarding bisexuality; to facilitate the development of bisexual community and visibility; to work for the equal rights and liberation of bisexuals and all oppressed peoples; and to eradicate all forms of oppression inside and outside the bisexual community. We are committed to being affirmatively inclusive of a multicultural constituency and political agenda.

Membership is open to everyone who agrees with our purpose and pays annual dues (or if unable to pay, requests a waiver.) Individuals are asked to contribute \$1 per \$1,000 of yearly income. Groups are asked to contribute \$25-100.

BiNet News is a publication of BiNet USA. It is sent to individuals and groups who have become members of BiNet USA, to bi and LGBT groups in areas with few networking resources, and to groups with whom we are building relations via newsletter exchanges, etc.

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Letters, cartoons, photographs and articles are encouraged and welcome for consideration. Please send to BiNet USA, P.O. Box 73272, Langley Park, MD, 20787-7327

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The World In My Eyes

Hi, there and welcome to you all. As I start my first *BiNet News*, I hope that all of you do indeed feel welcome. I liken this adventure of delivering a taste of BiNet USA to opening the front door of my apartment to meet a blind date. Some of you know me, but most don't. Come on in. We'll talk. We can tell stories. Let's get to know each other a bit. I hope you enjoy the newsletter, don't mind the dust, and, *no*, I won't be quoting from Depeche Mode lyrics.

When I first imagined writing in *BiNet News* I thought I could introduce myself by dancing through a flurry of self-identifying labels, life histories and other chronicles, but I realized that really wouldn't serve any purpose. Let me tell you about a recent daydream (I daydream often) where I was on an airplane. It was a standard scene; everybody was stowing items getting ready to takeoff. I started noticing how everybody's luggage seemed to have words on it. It seemed like everybody's luggage was meant to have their own personal identifying labels on them. For instance an African-American man might have the words "male" and "African-American" or his age on his Samsonite. I realized my luggage wasn't labeled and also, strangely, it didn't fit in the overhead bin nor underneath the seat in front of me. I was then startled from my daydream; I was probably at work. Still I let my mind wander

through the images of the daydream. I know that everybody has luggage or baggage they carry through life. Life experiences are combinations of good and bad. I don't believe in losing that luggage, but I also believe in the idea that labels can be limiting. They can serve to isolate people by their definitions. Labels can have their positive side, though. Labels can be playthings, sensual and intellectual sex toys. One of the labels I like for myself nowadays is "tomboy". Yes, I'm biologically male. I'm not gonna explain it. I'm not sure I understand but I feel it and understanding can be such a limitation at times. I guess all those labels I imagine for myself don't really fit, neither in the overhead bin nor underneath the seat in front of me.

BiNet USA is exciting to me; I hope it's exciting to you. I have been around this organization for the better part of five years now, and it's only getting better. Read the stories in this newsletter. BiNet USA people are organizers and activists, politicians and writers, community leaders and family leaders, and teachers and keynote speakers young and old — all extraordinarily talented, committed, and passionate people. I'm happy that this issue has stories that I consider close to the vest: BiNet people writing about BiNet USA.

Let's make a pact that we can do totally the opposite next issue. I would love it if everybody wrote me something about your amazing lives. I'm going to try to do the near-impossible and get the next issue done before the International Bisexual Conference in Boston, April 3-5, 1998. That means you'll have to write soon. We'll take that issue with us to the conference. Your stories will travel back from the conference with people from all over. You'll be famous!!

Tell me about you. I think every single one of you must be interesting in some way. Tell me about your lives, your struggles with your kids or your parents, your latest adventure, your challenges ... What have you learned recently? What would you like to tell people? I know it's cold out but let's meet down at the park. We'll sit on a park bench and talk. Tell me a little about yourself.

As I'm writing this, it's getting late in my part of the world, near midnight. This issue goes to the printer tomorrow. How about a couple of things to think about until next issue? What would happen if everybody thought differently? I don't mean some simple-minded approach to ending oppression (or selling Apple computers). What if everybody re-thought things which had become habit? What if you question your labels? What if you challenge yourself? Maybe brainstorm silly things like a new approach to shopping at the supermarket or come out to someone AGAIN who you've previously come out to. See what happens. Challenge ... adventure ... fun

See y'all next time,
Gerard Palmieri

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BISEXUALS AT CREATING CHANGE

A Gathering of the Tribes

By Lani Ka'ahumanu

A friend recently asked what I did for the weekend and I heard myself say I went to a gathering of the queer tribes. Over the last six years I've portrayed the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) Creating Change Conference as my working vacation, or my annual trek to an activists flirting and networking nirvana. When the words *gathering of the queer tribes* tumbled out I realized — Creating Change has also become a family reunion. My heart is home with this ever-evolving chosen family of activist and organizer friends. Three generations of us — elders, families with babies and children in strollers, teens, youth and students, middle aged and old queers of all stripes including heterosexuals and married folks. Role models, cultural icons, heroes, mentors, movers and shakers and surfers ... after all we were in San Diego.

I had wondered what Creating Change would be like for me in my new role as a board member of NGLTF, as the first out bisexual board member. I wasn't sure what to expect, if anything. I felt comfortable with and had been inspired and moved by the dedication and camaraderie of the people I met at my first board meeting. I knew I had only a few board duties that required my time, so basically assumed things would be the same. This was true for the most part, however any new role creates a slightly different vantage point. Sometimes I found myself observing, as if separate from the flurry of activity, a witness to history.

I kept thinking about Bisexual Youth Initiative organizer and in your face street theater activist and instigator Brad Dent from North Carolina. Three years ago at Creating Change he led a "Biphobia Makes Me Blue" action — we wore blue, painted our selves blue, and someone

strapped on a big blue dildo! The year before that he wore nothing but his underwear, a bag over his head and carried a sign during one of the plenary keynote speeches making a statement about bisexual invisibility at the conference. Another year he put together a photo display of the actions Billistic had done to counter the violent and hateful work of his state senator, Senator Helms and the Ku Klux Klan. Gads! I miss his outrageous energy and politically savvy playfulness. What would he have thought up this year? I know it is cliché, but we were visible and indeed everywhere. This is not to say biphobia or transphobia or all the insidious *isms* weren't present because they were; this work is never-ending. However, the

difference and why I thought of Brad was we've turned a huge corner, a corner that had (has) a very sharp and hurtful edge. There is no getting away from the inclusion of bisexual

(and transgender) people now. The momentum is with us. Those organizations, leaders and people who are not inclusive are frankly behind the times and will have to play catch-up. The organizations, leaders and people who are not bogged down with identity politics, and who hold a broad vision of social change and justice welcome the influx of our energy and understand how much stronger we are together. For someone who cut her queer activist teeth as a lesbian in 1976 and then as a bisexual in 1980, the view took my breath away, and at times almost brought me to tears.

Every year the BiNet USA folks talk with bisexuals in the host city and organize some sort of get together. Depending upon the city, the conference has its

own unique spin. This year the smiling faces of the San Diego bisexual community were everywhere. As part of the conference volunteer pool they welcomed one and all and helped facilitate the details of an almost 2,000-person event. To make bisexuals and bi-friendlies feel even more at home they generously arranged for a bisexual hospitality suite. Word has it folks are already talking about next November in Pittsburgh, PA.

The BiNet USA and *Anything That Moves (ATM)* table was overflowing with information, merchandise and fun. Our table was the place to be, and be seen. The crowds and gales of laughter attracted even more crowds and gales of laughter. *ATM* printed up small neon stickers that captured the imagination of conference goers. "Bi Dyke," "Bi Fag," "Bi-Trans Ally," labels were seen plastered on nametags. "Hey, where'd you get that sticker? I want one." could be heard in the elevators, hallways and workshops. The ally sticker was everywhere. Many gay men and lesbians told me they were forming a new "wanna be bi group" cuz we were having so much fun! Yep, we were definitely happening.

The range and variety of attendees and the scope of issues presented reflected the changes and the work that has happened throughout the years. A critical mass of people was not only supportive but inclusive of bisexual and transgender people. The presence of intersexed folks and their well-attended workshop were also a sign of the times. Much of the old us/them identity politics has given way to a desire to understand the basic issues of mutual concern. If people didn't understand, questions would be asked. If someone put a foot, or in some cases feet, in their mouth, others would assist with the opening and removal of said foot (feet). Dialogues and discussions around difference were more common than in your face confrontations or cold shoulders. A general sense of yes we're in this together, yes we can agree to disagree, and where



do we go from here prevailed.

On Saturday, I sat in the front off to the side with the board of directors and scanned the crowd of those assembled for

BI-TRANS ALLY

Anything That Moves

the keynote speech by former BiNet Regional Organizer, Bisexual Youth Initiative leader and public high school teacher Roland Coloma Sintos. For a split second I felt isolated and wanted to go sit with friends. That feeling only lasted as long as it took me to notice friends were in every part of the room, including the speaking platform and with the board. I could tell who the bisexuals were. We were the ones smiling really big smiles, and ready to jump out of our seats at a moments notice to applaud Roland. Actually, the teenagers and youth in the room were smiling really big smiles too. I felt a great deal of pride, and love, and respect for all the bisexual organizers and activists in that room and elsewhere who have taken leadership positions, who have taken the initiative, gotten involved, volunteered enormous amounts of time, worked hard and made things happen. I was also appreciatig the folks like Brad Dent and the many other bisexual organizers and activists whose dedication and energy over the years has brought us to this place.

The November 21st article on the conference in the *Washington Blade* headlined — "Movement showing signs of maturity" — captured the essence of those four days for me. We have matured. The 30-year anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall Riots marking the beginning of the modern gay movement is around the corner. Last October the national bisexual movement was 10 years old. Bisexuals in the USA have been organizing in cities across the country since the late 60s and early 70s but not until the 1987 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights did we realize the possibility of a national political movement with a community of

dedicated organizers and activists. Our local and national organizations now support the real "groundswell of bisexual people coming out of the closet nationwide." This phrase was BiPOL's rallying call to encourage visibility in our old smoke and mirror organizing strategies in San Francisco in the early 80s. Those smoke and mirror days are gone. We have come a long way in a relatively short amount of time. Bisexuals have established our own institutions and are working in coalition with others to move our agenda for justice and equality forward. For me, nothing speaks to that and the maturity of our movement more clearly, than my being invited to serve on the board of directors for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. This is a remarkable time and I am honored to serve this movement for freedom, justice and equality.

Attending Creating Change without ever leaving home

By Kris Roehling

After attending the 1996 Creating Change Conference I was certain that I would never miss another opportunity like that again; at least not in the near future while I was a National Coordinator for BiNet USA. Creating Change offers such powerful opportunities to make face-to-face connections with all those other queer organizations with whom we want build partnerships. Also this year, Roland Sintos-Coloma was delivering the keynote address at one of the plenary session! Unfortunately, jobs that I get paid for want to have a higher priority than the jobs for which I am only paid in appreciation points. So, I stayed in Orlando this year, organizing the volunteers for an AIDS Walk instead of going to Creating Change. In the words of my partner. ... Cha!

BUT there was redemption for this activist stuck in Orlando during such an exciting event! Desperate for contact, I turned to the Internet. I knew that Digital Queers often provided people an opportunity to check and to send e-mail directly from the conference. I also found out through NGLTF's e-mail list <n timer> that they had made an arrangement with OutRadio to broadcast the keynote addresses! YES! I was in! Gerard Palmieri came through in shining colors for "on the ground" reports ... especially of the belly dancer wandering around in the hallways. I forwarded his three e-mail posts to BIACT-L. Thanks, Gerard!

On the appropriate day at the appropriate time, my partner Dan and I sat down in front of his computer (he has better speakers) and listened to the plenary session where Roland spoke. This was an awesome experience! Let me tell you why. I knew that I wasn't hearing some delayed recording. I was sharing in The Big Moment! Roland's images were powerful and his delivery smooth. Dan commented that "I like the way he challenged the people who were present in a very respectful way." He not only challenged the people in the room. We were challenged as activists from 2,000 miles away.

It's actually very convenient listening to such a speech in the comfort of your own home. We were able to make quick comments like "GO ROLAND!" without disturbing others or embarrassing BiNet USA. One of the most powerful moments for me was when I heard the BiNet folks cheer at a comment that Roland had made. You all were sitting right up front and to the left, weren't you? I could hear your voices in that small outburst.

So thanks, Digital Queers, Gerard, NGLTF and OutRadio. When my co-leaders came back re-energized and re-focused from Creating Change, I was not left out of the loop. We are buzzing as a sextet and as an organization. Look for many great things in the next year. BiNet USA is going to FLY!

Roland Sintos Coloma, keynote speaker at Creating Change, 1997

I can't do justice to adequately reflect the pride and admiration felt when Roland was speaking at this conference. I have selected several passages from his speech to excerpt. — Gerard

... youth have been and will always be the vanguards of any movement, the visionaries of any community. What we want is liberatory democracy, grounded in social and economic justice, a revolution committed to eradicate any form of prejudice and discrimination, hatred and violence. We are keenly aware of the ravages of abuse and hate since we are their first victims and protegés. We are not invested in the institutions governed by adults that continuously silence our voices, police our bodies, dictate our actions, shackle our spirits and cage our humanity. In fact, we aim to transform these very same institutions. We dare create our own safer spaces, push the boundaries of tolerance, and make our own moves in spite and because of other people's refusal, neglect, incompetence, lack of vision and sincerity. We need not prove our courage and commitment, nor justify and apologize for our idealism. We know that adults can learn so much from us, young people. And that is our gift to the world.

I pay homage to the indigenous people of this land and honor their work of resistance and liberation. I pay homage to immigrants, to border-crossers, the fundamental pillars of our society. I also pay my respects to my parents, ... my first teachers from whom I learned how to question and for accepting and loving me for who I am and what I have become.

In order to speak, I have learned to ask, to question what is acceptable and what is not said, to challenge the realities of my existence and the possibilities of humanity, to be curious of what is around me and most especially what is inside me. I have learned to appreciate the simplicity and complexity, the fluidity and the gray area that I dared not to enter before, the middle ground that I have always traversed in my life, my politics and my work, that arena of contestation and liberation.

"Leadership ... is only incidental to the movement. The movement must be the most important thing. ... It must be something that is continuous, with goals and ideas that the leadership can then build upon." — Philip Vera Cruz

When we speak, we articulate our identities and politics. Our narratives are both liberating and challenging. Such realization and articulation make us accountable and responsible. Knowing who and what we are indicate our knowledge and understanding of the systematic and interweaving oppressive power dynamics. This also mandates our personal and collective duty to fight all fronts since our liberation as marginalized peoples and communities, as a society in general, is intricately connected. "We are not free until we are all free." Coming out, the recognition of who and what we are, is a daily process. It can sometimes take place as affirming steps, but in most cases as a series of battles. ... Our journey of liberation begins with first knowing our selves.

BEGINNERS LUCK AT CREATING CHANGE

By Ron Owen

When the BiNet USA quintet of NCs met at the first caucus, we discussed spreading out among the many wonderful workshops to be sure and get the broadest possible sampling. I volunteered to go to one that seemed a bit different. It spread over three sessions and was called, "Becoming a Better Leader"; it was required that one attend all three. What I didn't know at the time is that the facilitator, Dave Fleisher of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Foundation, had handpicked participants prior to the session and already assigned pre-work! As fate would have it I ran into Cheryl from the Intersexed Society of North America whom I'd met at the roundtable (see *Gathering*, page 1) and she was planning to attend. She offered me the "homework" questions which I spent about an hour on and later went to the first session at 4pm.

At the door, I introduced myself. He looked at the list and said it was a closed workshop. After I explained that I had done the pre-work, he let me join the "outsiders" group of five people he had squeezed in. I would be involved with this group and workshop for over eleven intense hours in the course of two days. The program guide said it was seminar for "community leaders who have realized some measurable results but who know they need to build a bigger, more diverse, and more capable team to take their work to the next level."

For those of you not familiar with the Victory Foundation, they help provide funding and, equally important, the training for potential candidates for public office running as openly gay. The majority of the training involves lecture, discussion and simulations and we got all three. The program we went through involved a simulation of getting 200 new volunteers for a fictitious organization called "Queer Action Coalition". If you are reading this and you are a leader or member of a local group, would it be exciting to have 200 hundred people or more turn up at an event?? To help?? To donate time and money??

Obviously, we can't take you through the whole journey of the simulation but I would like to share a few key learnings:

- **MAKE A LIST AND CHECK IT FREQUENTLY**

Making a list is something everyone can do. List everyone you know who you could ask to do more for your organization than merely attend a meeting. "Doing more" could include such things as newsletters, PR, phone list calling, data entry, etc. Include everyone who you have already met who you would ask to give money, expertise, time or any form of assistance. Some people may only have a dozen or two, others could have hundreds.

Next, you have to discipline yourself to "work the list". It is a living entity that needs new blood constantly! Challenge yourself to see how many new people you can meet every week. Ideally, you will identify leaders. What's a leader? For our purposes, a leader is someone with followers; people who can call on other people to take some action.

- **1-ON-1 MEETINGS**

As you start to work your list, you work your appointment book. Schedule one-on-ones every week. How many can you do? How many are you willing to do? Dave provided very specific guidelines for these sessions.

- Each 1-on-1 must be an INTENTIONAL, FACE TO FACE MEETING.
- The AGENDA of the meeting IS THE OTHER PERSON.
- The PURPOSE of the meeting to find out WHAT MOTIVATES THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING.
- Dig deep. Probe with questions like peeling an onion but remember, you should LISTEN 75% OF THE TIME! HEAR HOW THEY THINK without judgement.

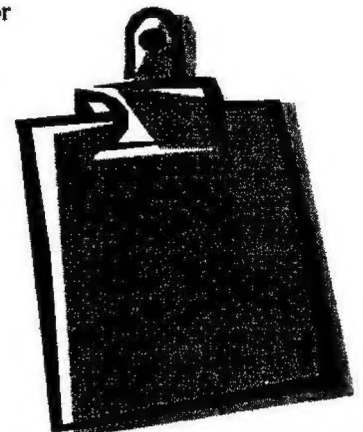
Once you know the person better, you can then go to the next steps of recruit and motivate. Pay attention to their self interest and show the connection between the work that you need done and the important work they want to do. Dave likes to make notes using little stick figures with at least 4 key motivators written by the body parts!

- **THE 5 + 50 RULE**

As you hold a sufficient number one-on-ones you bring together a team. As general rule, if you get ten of them together, five will stick. Then you get them to develop and work a list (after you check for dupes, of course). Teach them why you and they need a whole team. Those five with then bring together ten each. If this is sounding a little like the multi-level of grassroots organizing to you, I had the same feeling but the simulation helped drive home the power of this concept.

The final lesson was to build around an event or action. You give people a focus, set standards and recognize the ebb and flow of activism. This is why we must maintain and grow the LIST, conduct 1-ON-1s, and harness the power of 5 + 50.

If you would like more information or to discuss your current projects please contact me at <ron@binetaz.org>.



Landing at the First Annual Meeting of the Youth Initiative

by Marlann Patterson

This is what happens when you take the advice of a member of the sextet. You tend to find yourself in a great place. A huge room in the Orlando Public Library was fitted out with a tiny circle of chairs in the corner, on which sat many youths. Though I walked in late, I was warmly welcomed. I found myself in the middle of introductions, as seems inevitable to anyone who finds it hard to be on time. We were to give our expectations of the meeting and our names. After stumbling through that and reconfiguring the seats due to four newcomers, Roland and Spence began the first exercise.

We all wrote down six descriptions of ourselves on six pieces of paper. I thought, "Uhuh, they want us to label ourselves." I was happy with my labels. I didn't have to share them with anyone, so I felt free to be totally honest. It was still a little bit committed, it seemed, to be writing these things down in ink. I was trembling a little as I held my labels, face down, waiting for the next instruction.

"Pick two slips of paper and put them in the center." Oh, great. ... I get to rid myself of two labels. I picked two that I didn't care if anyone knew about, and threw them in the center. I was getting more and more nervous. What if I had to share some of these ... the plight of a closeted anything, I suppose.

"Hold out your remaining four slips, face down and we'll come around and take

two." Gulp. I hope they don't read them. At least they can't tell what my handwriting looks like. They didn't read them. To my knowledge, no one even looked in the center pile. The point of the exercise was internal. How did it feel to identify yourself concretely and honestly and be forced to give up some and have some identities taken by external powers? It seemed a very bisexual thing to think about since our label tends to be meshed into the larger "queer" label or ignored entirely many times.

Well, it didn't get easier. I think all of us were a little tense during the next exercise. We all stood on one end of the room, in a line facing the opposite end. The instructions were clear. We would listen for the identity or description that Spence called out and walk toward the other end of the room based on how much the identity meshed with our own. After each walk, we would wait for a minute to observe how we placed ourselves, where we were in the room relative to the other people, and how we felt about all of it. Some identities that I remember distinctly were, "human", "woman", "activist", "bisexual", "out". There were a lot of emotions circulating in the air. There was no release for them. We were all to be silent. No talking, laughing, or noise of any kind so that we would not disturb the thought processes of anyone else who

needed the space. It was hard sometimes walking certainly to the other side while the rest of the group stayed put. It was hard to walk with everyone, and not go all the way either. It felt good when the entire room marched definitely at the same pace all the way to the other side.

Emotionally drained but feeling a larger sense of community, I awaited the next part of the meeting. We took a break, which seemed too short since I think all of us wanted to talk to each other. Well, the next part of it was to talk about our experience with the walking exercise. It was a relief to talk, but mostly I ended up listening. The conversations flowed naturally into the next phase: "What's up with bisexual youth?" I don't know if any of us in the room had a major clue, but we tried. Some issues we came up with included a need for more youth outreach and an expansion of the existing Youth Institute for next year. We came up with some plans o' action to address these issues such as getting a youth section in *BiNet News*, creating a Bisexual Youth Initiative (BYI) brochure, compiling a list of bi organizations, and planning way ahead for the next Youth Institute. But mostly, we just had fun talking to each other and being in the presence of 12 bi youth and allies. For anyone who is interested in more information about any of the plans o' action listed above, we would joyously receive your correspondence. Contact Marlann Patterson (608 877 9246, mpatters@cae.wisc.edu, 2046 Barber Drive, Stoughton, WI 53589) for more information.

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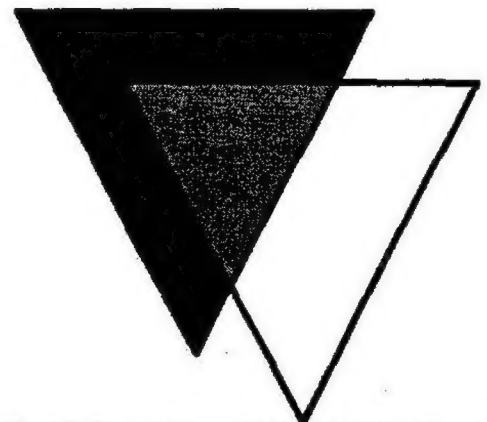
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SUNY president defends conference on women and sex

NEW PALTZ, NY (Reuters) – The president of the State University of New York at New Paltz defended free speech Friday after criticism of a women's studies conference at the college that discussed lesbianism, sadomasochism and sex toys.

Roger Bowen lashed out at his critics one day after Gov. George Pataki took him to task for lack of judgment in allowing a conference called "Revolting Behavior: The Challenges of Women's Sexual Freedom" to take place last weekend.

Bowen made his comments at another controversial conference, "Subject to Desire: Redisfiguring the Body," which included a play about AIDS and a session on the sexual content of Andy Warhol's artwork.

"Billy clubs are not used today to prevent free speech, but what still does happen on occasion is the intervention of authorities who seek to curb speech with the argument that speech loses its protection if it occurs in public-supported arenas and if its content is offensive to the champions of political correctness," Bowen told attendees during a discussion of free speech and modern drama.

He said he agreed with the organizers of the conference, who wrote in their program, "Using money or ideologies to hold ideas hostage is antithetical to the very nature of the public university."

Bowen said a democratic society operated on the basic principle that people had the right to express different or unpopular views without punishment or restraint.

"This has nothing to do with freedom of speech and everything to do with the proper expenditure of tax dollars," Pataki said Thursday in a statement. "It is more than just disturbing that a tax-supported SUNY campus would sponsor this kind of activity."

The Republican governor also ordered

Thomas Egan, chairman of the SUNY board of trustees, to report to him on the issue within a week and asked for recommendations for preventing this type of conference from being held at a public university.

The conference featured topics such as birth control and AIDS education in addition to women's sexual toys, lesbianism and sadomasochism.

In a letter to *The Wall Street Journal* responding to a story that termed the conference "a syllabus for sickos," Bowen said he supported the women's conference but had told the organizers he personally found several of the topics to be "offensive" and in "poor taste" resignation over the SUNY New Paltz Women's Studies Conference which included S/M and sex toys.

The protest was the second surrounding the heated issue of academic freedom at SUNY, as earlier in the month activists from the queer, leather, and feminist communities demonstrated outside the Board's previous meeting in midtown Manhattan. Adding to the pressure, SUNY has just been given a public donation of \$350,000 in support of free speech. In accepting the donation, the president read a statement from the donors praising the conference organizer while specifically condemning censorship and conservative legislators who have threatened the school.

Chancellor John Ryan told reporters that the Bowen investigation had been discussed in executive session by the Trustees and was "under continuing review." After the meeting, Dan O'Sullivan, Executive Organizer of SASU, asked, "Is the Board going to censure future conferences at SUNY?" Chancellor Ryan responded, "I don't think they will do anything like that."

"I'm still calling for the resignation of President Bowen," stated Candace

deRussy, Board of Trustees Member and Chairman of the Academic Standards Committee, as she left the meeting.

"How much do we want government to interfere in academic conferences or medical conferences or even prison conferences just because they receive state funding?" asked Robb Goldstein, a representative of the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) who attended the Board of Trustees meeting. "That's the real issue here." NCSF is a national organization seeking to change public policy and laws that prejudice society against those engaged in alternative sexual or affectional practice.

The next State University of NY Board of Trustees meeting will take place on January 27th. The location has not been officially released, but SUNY administrators say it will likely be in Albany again, at the State University Plaza.



National Coordinators and Regional Organizers - Fall, 97 / Winter, 98

NATIONAL COORDINATORS

Stephanie Berger
<virago@slip.net>

Marcella Bucknam
<quest15@juno.com>

Deb Kolodny
<debraruth@aol.com>

Ron Owens
<ron@binetaz.org>

Kris Roehling
<krisr@magicnet.net>

One Vacant Position

REGIONAL ORGANIZERS

NORTHEAST REGION:

MAINE, MASSACHUSETTS,
NEW HAMPSHIRE, RHODE ISLAND,
& VERMONT

Susan Corcoran

Kim Ward

one vacant position

TRI-STATE REGION:

CONNECTICUT, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK

Jennifer Hadlock

Tom Limoncelli

Penelope Williams - Youth Organizer

MID-ATLANTIC REGION:

DISTRICT OF COLOMBIA, DELAWARE,
MARYLAND, PENNSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA,
& WEST VIRGINIA

Marly Davidson

Heidi Jones

Dania Palanker

SOUTHEAST REGION:

ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA,
MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA,
PUERTO RICO, SOUTH CAROLINA,
TENNESSEE, & THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Kate Clemm

Paul Marshall

Tim Turner - Youth Organizer

MIDWEST REGION:

IOWA, KANSAS (ALL OF KANSAS CITY),
MINNESOTA, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA,
SOUTH DAKOTA, UPPER MICHIGAN,
& WISCONSIN

Steven Butler

Basia Rompa - Youth Organizer

Myke Selha

CENTRAL REGION:

ILLINOIS, INDIANA, KENTUCKY,
LOWER MICHIGAN, MISSOURI, & OHIO

Robert Morrison

Tim Turner - (interim) Youth
Organizer

two vacant positions

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION:

ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, OKLAHOMA,
& TEXAS

Deborah Dixon

David Lewis

one position vacant

SOUTHWEST REGION:

ARIZONA, COLORADO, NEW MEXICO,
NEVADA, & UTAH

Stevi Belka - Youth Organizer

Arlando Teller

Tarita Thomas

NORTHWEST REGION:

ALASKA, IDAHO, OREGON,
MONTANA, WASHINGTON, & WYOMING

Brittany Wilson - Youth Organizer

two positions vacant

PACIFIC COAST AND ISLANDS REGION:

CALIFORNIA, GUAM, HAWAII

Roland Sintos Coloma

Francine Turner

MID-ATLANTIC

— Heidi Jones

Organizers' hopes that a Rehoboth Beach, DE location would attract greater numbers proved on target as attendance at BiNet USA's third Mid-Atlantic regional retreat was close to double the previous year's turnout. Nearly sixty-five people from the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond gathered October 17-19 for a weekend of workshops, socializing, and parties. Rain and stormy weather, the nemesis of the previous year's retreat, had little impact on activities or spirits this year.

Working with the theme "Gender," retreat attendees engaged in a number of discussions and exercises reflecting that topic. At Friday's opening plenary, Programming Chairperson Deb Kolodny helped break the ice by leading a round of BiNet Bingo, a game which contestants attempt to win by learning the most facts about their fellow contestants. The evening closed with a wine and cheese social and a wicked game of dominoes.

Saturday morning began with an exercise in which participants wrote down expressions of their personal feelings about gender. These comments were then gathered and distributed to the other participants, who read the remarks aloud. Since the comments were unattributed and the gender of the reader was not necessarily the same as that of the writer, the exercise challenged assumptions about what kind of people hold what kinds of beliefs about gender.

Next, attendees proposed topics related to gender and gathering into groups to discuss them. The group members were asked to make a presentation to the group to try to convey the essence of their discussion. One group performed a skit in which butch/femme police attempt to mandate haircuts for the hapless customers of a particularly inflexible hair styling shop. In another presentation, the group members lined up according to their own perception of their position in the gender spectrum, and then audience members changed the order of the line-up according to their own perceptions. The

afternoon was devoted to special interest workshops, including discussions on domestic violence and women-only space for bisexuals.

A banquet at the Henlopen Hotel Saturday night gave attendees an opportunity to relax, enjoy good food, and mingle. Dinner was followed by the notorious open-mike event, in which BiNet members show off their talents. BiNet National Coordinator emeritus, Steve Getman, led off the performances with a reading of H. P. Lovecraft's "The Wolf." Not satisfied with Getman's sonorous rendition, the audience chimed in with sound effects throughout the story. The show also included poetry, singing, and instrumental music, and was capped off by a drag performance by several BiNet members. After the open-mike session, attendees socialized and danced to the music of a rock duo, whose appeal to the largely thirty-something audience transcended the general undanceability of its mostly 60s-70s folk-rock repertoire.

Sunday morning began with discussion groups, including one on gender identity, one on creative writing and another on Paula Rust's book *Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Politics*. The retreat closed with a moving exercise in which participants shared with others what they would like their fellow attendees to carry with them from the retreat. In a first for the Mid-Atlantic region, BiNet members gathered afterward to elect a regional organizer to replace Margaret Rood, a departing regional organizer, and a youth organizer to replace Spence Carver, who moved out of the region earlier this year. Running uncontested, Heidi Jones of Silver Spring, MD was quickly installed as the new Regional Organizer and Dania Palanker of Washington, DC as the new regional organizer for youth.

NORTHEAST

— Kim Ward

I have been in contact with other bi organizers from Boston, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Chris Corcoran just signed on to be another Regional

Representative last month. We're working together to get some connections going for people in the New Hampshire area.

We have been organizing more frequent social gatherings, keeping in touch with some members via e-mail and getting some more articles in the local queer paper. I have had several new people in my Vermont group, too. There is a good pattern of repeat workers and fun people showing up in Vermont.

We just had our annual meeting at Vermont's annual Queer Town meeting. A hopeful number of new faces showed up as well as half of the room being repeat attendees.

We had a dialogue with the lesbian community and bi women here. It was great! There were 31 women in the room.

TRI-STATE

— Tom Limoncelli

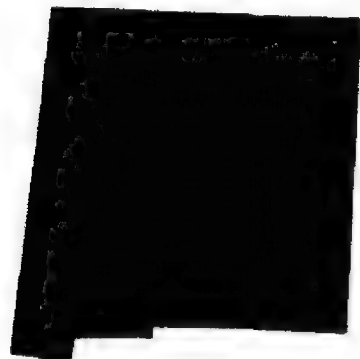
The Tri-State Region is starting our own newsletter. We want to make it interesting for all the region and short so that local groups can put it into their mailings. We will have volunteers contact the local groups so that each group in the region can have a little sentence or paragraph.

We had our annual Regional Conference in August. About 40 people came to the event; many from the Connecticut area where it was held. We split into several interest groups to work on various issues (one of those was the newsletter).

— Jennifer Hadlock

The Tri-State region had its second annual meeting/gathering/conference in Hartford in August. We made plans for the year, had workshops, dance, picnic and a lot of fun! People from all over said it was worth coming all the way to Hartford. Next year we hope to have a gathering in NJ. We are also trying to expand to a bi-annual event. Since then things have been slow regionally although a lot has happened at local levels. Connecticut had a successful Bisexual halloween Dance/Party and actually raised money!!

(NOTES continued on page 12)



SOUTHWEST

— Ron Owen

The southwest continues to grow with some very exciting activity in Colorado with the start of a newsletter, "The BiNet BiMonthly", serving the state's groups including Bisexual Women's Voices, BiNet Colorado, The Crossroads Project, and a bi support group hosted by PFLAG Denver. Anyone interested in receiving the publication can call (303) 784-5557 or write to PO Box 18897, Denver, CO 80218-0897. Congratulations to the staff and to editor Rev. Gerry White.

New Mexico has a few dynamic people running support groups in Albuquerque that met with National Coordinator Ron Owen during the summer to learn more about BiNet USA and to see if there is any way we can lend a hand. It is small community that is fortunate to have a strong Community Center that is bi welcoming.

BiNet AZ is going strong in its third year and is branching out to Tucson in addition to the Phoenix area. We have also formed a strong coalition with the polyamory group, Community Circle. Our Youth Group continues to establish itself with meetings in coffee houses and at homes. Our speakers group has done a great job speaking to student groups on college campuses to educate and create Bivisibility.

BiNet AZ actively participated in lobbying for the Hate Crimes bill which finally was signed into law. Our next project, BiPol AZ, is to join the fight from a radical state legislature, Karen Johnson, who every year introduces outrageous

anti-gay proposals. Currently she is proposing to ban all gay people from being able to be foster parents by requiring them to be legally married to insure children are brought up in "normal families".

The BiNet AZ banner shown proudly during the Pride March (absent for 10 years in AZ) and was the first ever bi contingent. BiNet also had great participation in the pride Festivals in Phoenix and Tucson and the annual AIDS WALK where we raised over \$370. And our very own BiNet AZ co-chair, Jon Gates, was elected to the Board of Directors of the Phoenix Community Center. Congratulations!

Planning is underway for the first Southwestern Conference on Bisexuality '98. Anyone interested in participating in any form should contact BiNet AZ, 3136 N 3rd Ave, Phoenix AZ 85013, (602) 280-9074 or visit us at www.BiNetAZ.Org and email us at BiNetAZ@BiNetAZ.org

Two new SW Regional Coordinators are joining YRO Stevi Belka: Tarita Thomas and Arlando Teller. Arlando is also a youth leader with years of experience working with youth in his native Navajo community. Tarita Thomas, native of Chicago joined BiNet after moving here less than two years ago. To meet Tarita is to never forget her! She is an African-American spiritual feminist out and proud bi who speaks her mind! She has worked in local organizing and is one of our most popular speakers on the campus tour. In addition to the Conference and youth, their focus for 98 will be on opening up Nevada next. Las Vegas ... you've just been warned!

PACIFIC COAST & ISLANDS

— Roland Sintos Coloma

On November 12-16, 1997, San Diego hosted over 1,500 activists and organizers from across the nation and other countries to attend the 10th annual Creating Change Conference, sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The "bi" presence and visibility were everywhere and contagious: from the very busy BiNet USA table, the bi

"tagging" of ATM's Mark Silver and the introduction of NGLTF's Board of Directors that includes our very own Lani Ka'ahumanu, to the myriad of bi-specific and bi-inclusive workshops and the keynote speech of Roland Sintos Coloma, a BiNet USA Regional Organizer and Bisexual Youth Initiative steering committee member. In her speech, California state legislator Sheila Kuehl even dared to advocate for changing NGLTF's name to include "bisexuals and transgenders." Next year's conference, which will coincide with NGLTF's 25th anniversary, will be held in Pittsburgh. For more info about NGLTF, check out their web site at www.nglhf.org.

The University of California Board of Regents, on their November 21st meeting in the Los Angeles campus, passed a measure (13-12) to extend health and retirement benefits to same-sex couples. Although Governor Wilson recently appointed three new board members in an effort to block it, the proposal was approved, primarily for faculty recruitment and retention. University faculty, staff and students have been fighting for such benefits since 1981. The Board will consider the extension of the benefits to opposite-sex couples in their January 1998 meeting.

On November 22-23, 1997, LIFE Lobby (California's LGBT and HIV/AIDS statewide political coalition) elected me to its Board of Directors. LIFE Lobby's mission is to coordinate, develop and promote the statewide community-driven public policy agendas of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and HIV-affected Californians. LIFE has over 70 community-based political, social, religious, cultural and health-related organizations. Two of its major upcoming events are the Queer Youth Lobby Day during the Martin Luther King weekend in January 1998 and the AIDS Budget Day in April 1998, both occurring in Sacramento. For more info about LIFE, check out their web site at www.lifelobby.org.

Notes From Nebraska

By Marcella Bucknam

My recent move from Washington DC to Omaha, Nebraska has reinforced my commitment to a true rural outreach effort. Accordingly, this has been one of my major focuses for the past several months.

With the help of organizers and activists from all over the country, the BiNet USA Rural Outreach packet is finally ready for printing and distribution. This packet has information with three major focuses.

1) Isolation Fighters – information that will allow individuals to seek out community and support even if they can't make personal contact with other bisexuals. This is information about subscriptions, catalogues and mail order information, Internet and web sites, and national organizations.

2) Bisexual and Queer Information – This section includes fact sheets, reading lists, historical information, and even a glossary!

3) Organizing and Activism – How to create community where you are including information about starting a bi group, running a regional retreat, and also information on building community within existing groups, queer and straight.

We're pretty proud of this packet, so I decided to gather some help and take it for a spin at Creating Change, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's annual conference for LGBT activists and organizers. With the wonderful assistance of Ron Owen, Brian Davis, and Roland Coloma, we presented a workshop called "Reaching Out" that discussed how to reach people who are isolated geographically, financially, socio-economically, or due to age, ability, gender, and other reasons. The workshop was well received and everyone received a copy of the new packet (slightly modified to be less bi-specific).

We will be distributing the packet to ROs, local groups, and individuals beginning in the next couple of months. In fact, our biggest problem at this time is funding for printing and mailing the packet. This need for funding brought me to a closer look at our financial situation with the result that I have committed to a major fundraising effort for 1998. Included will be a grant application for funds specifically for rural outreach. We're being very ambitious with

this effort and will try to get funding to cover not only distribution of the packet but also training, travel, and support for speakers and other needed projects that will allow ROs and local leaders to fight isolation.

Deb's report already discusses our recent work with GLSEN (Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network) (See *A National Coordinator's Work is Never Done*, page 22) which is also an effort I'm very excited and proud of. Thanks to both Deb and Roland for all of their great work. I will be continuing my part of this effort by locating bisexual contacts for each of the local GLSEN chapters. One of our goals is to be sure that all GLSEN materials and projects are inclusive of bisexual and transgender issues and local contacts will help to make that happen! GLSEN has recently added bisexual and transgender to its national policies and goals and this is a wonderful time to be creating stronger local involvement with those chapters.

I look forward to providing you with exciting updates on these and other project in the next issue!

JOIN BINET USA'S ADVISORY BOARD

Wouldn't it be great if we could find a way to harness the energies and experience of former BiNet USA leaders without burning them out? Wouldn't it be great to have a connection with other leaders in progressive communities who could give us sage advice about their areas of expertise?

Well, now we can! BiNet USA is actively recruiting former BiNet USA Leadership for its Advisory Board that was approved at last year's business meeting. Members of the Advisory Board may choose among several different jobs that we have now outlined or they may create their own projects. All former leaders are invited. Kris Roehling or Marcella Bucknam will be calling you soon. If you are a former leader for BiNet USA and you don't get a call soon ... don't panic! We may have lost track of you. If you would like to find out more, contact BiNet USA. We want your input!

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email info@biconf.org, or visit <http://www.biconf.org>

Thank you to the Harvard Graduate Student Council for funds that help make this conference possible.
The conference is not sponsored by Harvard University or the Science Center.

Delight in
Bisexuality

FICTION CORNER

Hello and welcome to the Fiction Corner by debra diana blue. I am a 41 yr. old African American bisexual female — no, this is not a personal — and I want to make your acquaintance by telling you a bit about me. I live in the Washington, DC area. I am a secretary for the federal government. I have 2 sons, 2 cats and I enjoy writing immensely. I'm also an avid reader and an internet junkie. It is my extreme hope to have a robust fiction page to submit to the BiNet newsletter every quarter. As this is my first attempt at writing for a newsletter, I hope you gentle readers will bare ... oops, bear with me.

I would like to submit a bit of a short short story and a poem to begin my journey as Fiction Editor. More importantly, I would like to ask each and every reader to help me round out the fiction corner by submitting your writings for publication. I will be looking for short stories and poetry. You can send submissions to me at ddbblue@smart.net on the internet. I hope in time to have a P.O. box for folks who don't have internet access to submit material to me. I feel very good about embarking on this journey with you and I hope I prove myself worthy.

"Writing in the dark"
by debra diana blue

You became my reality on a rainy afternoon. I was fidgeting at the newsstand with my bags, umbrella and change purse trying to buy some news when I spotted you sitting at that table and looked into your eyes. I dropped everything. I was transfixed by your gaze. You came over to help me pick up my things and collect myself and invited me to join you for tea. It seemed fitting to have tea, in the rain with a beautiful stranger in whose eyes, I lost myself. For 3 hours, your dazzling smile and dimples held me captive.

I absolutely have to get home and make dinner for my family. If I don't, my husband will turn himself loose in my kitchen and create a disaster. we exchange numbers and smile our good-byes. I drive home in the rain, glad I don't have to explain how I lost 3 hours. Something about you dances on my nerves. After dinner, the homework is checked, the kids are in bed. The rain softly taps on the window and I feel warm inside remembering the sound of your voice.

My husband reaches for me but I'm not there. I'm sitting at a little outdoor cafe, drinking tea in the rain.

oh girlfriend
by debra diana blue
30 may 97

even as a little girl you made me blush
I used to have to tell my heart to hush

thinking it would give me away
no one knows to this very day

remember the time you skinned your knee
and you brought your little wound to me

I knew right then, I knew right there
I wanted to follow you everywhere

I could never tell you how I felt
instead at your bloody knee I knelt

making it better, saving your life
wishing that you could be my wife

though we were only 12 years old
you brought this little majik to my soul

and here we are as women grown
having struck out on our own

our mothers marvel at how we turned out
you tall and lithe, me short and stout

you with a husband, a family, a plan
me with a business, 3 cats and no man

you will always be the girl of my dreams
having never suspected ... or so it would seem.

Bisexual Sightings

Here's an interesting assortment of *Sightings*. I thank Cliff Arneson, Wayne Roberts of the Australian Bisexual Network, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Stephen Harvey and our illustrious editor Gerard Palmieri who forwarded some of these gems.

It's not about greed...

TV Channel Four has taken a hard look at bisexuals, also known as "greedies," who are disdainful of straights, whom they have dubbed "monosexuals." Professional masseuse and cook Felicity Diamond, a proud switch-hitter says, "It's not about greed for a number of partners. I want the best, not the most - I'm very, very selective. I have lots of friendships and good relationships and sometimes they become sexual. When I like people I don't care what genitals they have."

SEEN: *Montreal Gazette* by Mordecai Richler, October 20, 1997

But then again there is greedy and then there is greedy

"The Gay Metropolis" a new book says John F. Kennedy may have engaged in threesomes with a woman (actually two women, but only one at a time) and a bisexual man during sailing trips they took together. The other man is identified as Michael Butler a theatrical producer in Chicago. Butler is quoted as saying, "It was just the three of us. You can imagine what happened. It was a scene." Butler refuses to say who did what with whom.

SEEN: *Boston Globe*, November 4, 1997

Bisexuals threatening the monogamous "human ideal"

GAY RABBI BREAKS GROUND AT TEMPLE JUDEA

Donald Goor will assume leadership of 900-family Reform congregation, which considers his sexual orientation a non-issue in his new role. ... One dissenter to the acceptance of gay behavior in Jewish religious life is writer and radio talk-show host Dennis Prager, a conservative Jewish commentator.

"I would have intellectual respect for the [gay] movement to equate homosexual relations with heterosexual relations if that movement took a different position on bisexual behavior - because bisexuals have a choice," Prager said. "That the homosexual movement supports bisexual behavior ... means that their position is not at all based on the argument that homosexuals have no choice. "Rather, it is an attempt to undo the 3,000-year-old Jewish battle to make heterosexual, monogamous love the human ideal."

He declined to comment on Goor.

Responding to Prager's remarks, Rabbi Jerry Danzig, executive director of Valley Beth Shalom, said that human makeup is so complex "that I would not be so presumptuous to say even bisexual people are choosing at any one moment."

SEEN: *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1997

Fundraising letter - October, 1997

From: Kevin M. Cathcart, Esq.

Executive Director

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.

120 Wall Street, Ste 1500

NY NY 10269-0703

Dear Friends,

... Lambda also is protecting the best interests of children by defending their parents. In December, we won an important victory in Illinois where an appeals court decided that bisexual mother Becky Schroeder could keep her children. This case means that, in settling custody disputes, Illinois courts cannot hold gay and straight parents to different standards, or assume that children are harmed simply because their parents are lesbian or gay.

Well hey there ... I thought attorneys were logical and lined up their arguments! So Lambda "won an important victory" for a bisexual mother in a custody dispute which proves that chil-

dren are not "harmed simply because their parents are lesbian or gay." Hmmm ...

And later in the same letter

Earning the right for same-sex couples to marry is another important step to strengthening families. ... In 1996, Lambda won *Baehr v. Miike*, the "Hawaii Marriage Trail," a decision which we believe will lead to legalized marriage for lesbian and gay couples by 1998. However, a backlash is underway, with the President signing the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), and 26 states passing anti-marriage bills.

How many bisexual people do you know in same sex couplings that would like to be married legally? Hmmm, are two bisexual women or two bisexual men or a bisexual woman and a bisexual man who are coupled what constitutes a bisexual couple? And if this is true, how does one recognize a bisexual couple? Or can we just say same or mixed gendered couples? Oh the challenges visible bisexual people bring to the heterosexist social fabric - you've got to love it! Write LAMBDA. Personally, I'm critiquing the fundraising letters, thanking them for their work for Becky and sending them back with no money.

And speaking of writing ...

Smart Magazine, Foolish Advice

In the November 1997 issue of *Ebony Magazine*, the "Ebony Advisor" answers a question from a woman concerned about HIV by trotting out inaccurate information about bisexuals. The woman, who identifies herself as 23 years old, states that a "little voice inside me is telling me I have AIDS. [...] My life would be over and everything I've worked for would be a waste." The Advisor tells the woman to seek counseling, and says there's no reason for her to think she may be HIV-positive if

(*SIGHTINGS* continued on page 16)

(SIGHTINGS continued from page 15)

she has not engaged in risk behavior, "including unprotected sex with partners who are high risk, such as ... bisexuals." The Advisor then goes on to suggest the woman be tested, and do some research on transmission.

Ahem, IT'S WHAT YOU DO, NOT WHO YOU DO! A BISEXUAL IDENTITY HAS NEVER SPREAD HIV, PERIOD. Instead of taking the opportunity to educate this woman about condom use and safer sex, the Advisor shirks its responsibility and promulgates the misguided and hurtful belief that bisexual men are somehow more "risky" than others. Tell *Ebony* that subscribing to myths about bisexuals helps no one, and hurts many. Contact: Lerone Bennett, Jr., Executive Editor, *Ebony* 820 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 30305-2103, fax (312) 322 9375

SEEN: GLAAD ALERT, November 7, 1997

Australian Bisexual Network success

A submission and verbal evidence by the Australian Bisexual Network to the Senate Inquiry into Sexuality (and Transgender Identity) Discrimination in 1996, has had a direct influence on several recommendations released this week in the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's Report to the Australian Parliament. Below are those Recommendations that specifically refer to bisexual persons.

The Committee believes that there should be specific protection for bisexuals.

Chapter 1. Recommendation 2. All organisations receiving Commonwealth funding must provide access to services on equal terms to bisexual persons, and to transgender persons.

Chapter 4. Recommendation 1. That bisexuality be retained as a distinct sexuality in the definition of 'sexuality' in Clause 5 of the Sexuality Discrimination Bill 1995.

Recommendation 6. That the Sexuality Discrimination Bill 1995 add refusal to accept bisexuality as a distinct sexuality as a ground of discrimination, as follows:

Clause 6(5)(c) Harassment of a person on the grounds of bisexuality includes a refusal to accept bisexuality as a distinct sexuality.

Chapter 5. Recommendation 6.

5.192 That the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission ensure that funding of information and education services on gender and sexuality discrimination take account of the specific needs of transgender and bisexual persons and allocate resources for appropriate services in respect of these groups.

Let the politicians know that all forms of discrimination are unacceptable to you and that their failure to support the Bill to outlaw Sexuality Discrimination will result in you not voting for them at the next Federal election and that you will encourage others to not vote for them.

SEEN: BIACT-L e-mail discussion list

k.d. Constantly Craving Creativity

k.d. lang couldn't have been more gracious during her February 6 phone date with *The Lesbian News*. ...

LN: Do you think sexual orientation is a question of nature or nurture? Do you think people are born lesbian or gay or they choose to be?

k.d.: ... I think it's probably different in every case. I think it's genetic, I think it's a choice, I think it's a reaction, I think it's an interest. I think it's love ultimately. I think it's everything and I think it's really different for each individual — how they come to it, if there was a struggle, if it was completely natural, if they feel comfortable with it, if they feel bisexual. I think it's everything, I really do, and I don't think it's necessarily something that needs to be defined. Although I think it does need to be defined within the individual at certain times. I find that my sexuality — although I've never been with a man — it has a life of it has a life of its own. There are times when I am attracted to men and I take that as a good sign that it's like an organism all on its own. It's a thing that has a life ... At a certain point we have to understand who we are and what we feel more comfortable being — but in no way limit ourselves. I think the pressure of having to decide

what you are is a negative thing. It can keep people from falling in love with who they might decide to fall in love with. I'm not a real great example because I've never slept with a man, but I think it's good to keep your mind open. I think that's what separates evolution from stagnation.

SEEN: *The Lesbian News*, March, 1997
Love that gal!

Anti-Gay (Freedom Editions), edited by Mark Simpson

Book Review by Dennis Harris

"*Anti-Gay* is a miscellaneous selection of essays by disputatious malcontents who rail, frequently with good reason, against the mediocrity and commercialism of life in the urban ghetto. Written in an acid style that is ultimately too arch and withering for its own good, the collection reflects genuine fatigue with the conventional gay lifestyle. ... Despite the presence of a few worthwhile pieces, however, *Anti-Gay* is at best a gratuitous act of bitching against the unshakable complacency of the gay status quo, whose Middle-American wholesomeness the authors attempt to undermine by advocating such diabolically subversive things as bisexuality, a phenomenon they treat as a shocking affront to the entrenched interests of a moribund subculture. In articles by Joe Eadie and Lisa Power, bisexuals are described as a transgressive force capable of shattering Western civilization as we know it today, a terrorist organization whose members blur oppressive erotic boundaries and sabotage gender polarities.

At times the book is so strident in its rejection of the hum-drum marital pleasures of old-fashioned pederasty that I found myself asking what is wrong with fixed boundaries, with the "binary opposites" that would-be sexual revolutionary Marge Garber (author, *Vice Versa*) one of the beloved fairy godmothers of the queer studies movement, so ineptly dismantles. When did we succumb hook, line, and sinker to this lame idea that we are incomplete as people if we don't experience a little bit of everything, if we don't go around

(SIGHTINGS continued on page 17)



Bi Thoughts for the New Year

by Fritz Klein

As 1998 begins, my thoughts go back to some of my personal bi highlights for the past year:

In January I visited the Fort Lauderdale BiNet meeting through the auspices of Luigi Ferrer. March saw me in New Zealand where I was interviewed on TV and radio. A major New Zealand newspaper, the *Sunday Star*, gave my interview a full page spread. It all came about through the efforts of bi activist and friend, Geoffrey Vine.

In May, I got together with Nick Smith in Cambridge, England where we began coordinating and linking both of our web pages. His is an excellent bi site concentrating on U.K. and Europe (www.bi.org) while Bi Options now concentrates on North America (www.bisexual.org).

In July I attended the fourth Southern California Bisexual Conference — great program and a wonderful fundraising

party on Friday night. August saw me in Delaware where I stayed with Larry Peterson of HOTTS (Husbands Out To Their Spouses). I met four of the nicest bi men and found their organization to be most helpful.

In October, I met Mike Page in Miami who has just started a great bi web page (www.bicafe.com). (Check it out!) While in November I met many of the bi activists right here at home in San Diego at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change Conference.

My trips carry me far and wide. In 1998 I hope to travel even more. BiNet USA is planning to train regional coordinators. As part of that effort I hope to schedule events in some of those cities to aid in this endeavor.

On October 23-25, 1998 San Diego will host the BiWest/SoCal 1998 Bi Conference. Besides papers and

workshops, the conference will have a pre-Halloween Carnival on Saturday night. In addition, we are planning to advertise in national art magazines to obtain bisexual art which we will display and have for sale at the conference. You can find out about the conference by looking up its web page: <http://www.bisexual.org/biwest> or writing: Fritz Klein, 4545 Park Blvd #207, San Diego, CA 92116 Tel: (619) 542-0088; Fax: (619) 542-0006 e-mail: <FritzKlein@aol.com>

Of course the big 1998 headline is the 5th International Bisexual Conference to be held April 3-5 in Boston. For registration and information, write: Conference, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140 or look up the web page: <http://www.biconf.org>. The conference expects over 600 participants. In closing, I wish you all a most happy bi 1998 and will definitely see lots of you in Boston!

(SIGHTINGS continued from page 16)

grazing on life's smorgasbord of sexual possibilities, sampling all of its various dishes, taking a little chocolate with our peanut brittle, a little of the hot and spicy flavors of the Orient with our Campbell's Soup and tuna-noodle casserole? This notion of well-roundedness is rooted not in any radical vision of the nonconformist, but in a basically conservative vision of the good citizen, the healthy team player who always welcomes new experiences. Let's hear it for people who are not well-rounded, who are composites of jagged angles and sharp corners, and who consider the reigning pieties about bisexuality little more than a by-product of a hidebound belief in the moral rectitude of maintaining an open mind." etc. etc.
SEEN: *Bay Area Reporter*, San Francisco

Well, what's left to say, let's buy the book! \$14.95!

Anything That Moves in Berlin!

Allan Berube, the gay historian who wrote "Coming Out Under Fire", told me that while traveling in Germany last August he went to the One Hundred Year Anniversary exhibit commemorating the Homosexual Movement at the Berlin Museum. *Anything That Moves* magazine (Issue #2) was part of the exhibit!!!

And finally an all inclusive word we can all relate to:

FABGLITTER

Fetish Allies Bisexuals Gays Lesbians
Intersexed Transgender Transsexual
Engendering Revolution

Thanks to ATM's Mark and Heather!



IBC5: Boston, MA, USA What you need to know

Bisexual luminaries from around the world converge on Boston for the 5th International Conference on Bisexuality on April 3-5, 1998. This three-day conference is expected to draw close to 700 attendees from over a dozen countries, making it the largest international bi conference ever. The conference theme is "One World, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities, and the World". Plenary speakers include Kerry Lobel, Executive Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Elias Farajé-Jones, author of "In Search of Zion: A Study of the Significance of Afrika for Three Black Religious Movements."

With hundreds of workshops, the Boston conference features enough exciting subjects to provide a fascinating experience for all attendees. Workshop sessions cover subjects ranging from bisexual history to body image, from class differences to sexuality. Some sessions will be held in Spanish. The conference features vendors, social events, scheduled excursions to the Boston nightlife, film and video presentations and discussions, and much, much more!

The conference will be held on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, MA, USA. For information, see the conference web site, <http://www.biconf.org> or call (617) 747-4451. Pre-registration secures the best rate; a registration form is included in this issue. Send your form and pack your bags, because in April 1998, Boston is the place to be bi!



5th International Bisexual Conference (IBC5) One World. Many Faces

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

The 5th International Bisexual Conference (IBC5) will take place in Boston Massachusetts, USA on April 3, 4, and 5, 1998. The IBC5 conference theme is "One World, Many Faces: Unity and Diversity in Bi Communities, Queer Communities, and the World."

We are currently seeking proposals for presentations, papers, panel discussions, performances, and workshops in the following subject tracks:

- Activism
- Youth/Student
- Media/Culture
- Gender
- Bisexual History
- Safer Sex/HIV
- Sexuality
- Non-Bi Partners/Families
- Film and Video
- Our Bodies: Differing Ability, Health, Image
- Global/Regional/Racial/Cultural/Class Differences
- Organizing / Activism
- Writers/Literature
- Relationships
- Research/Theory
- Spirituality
- Personal Growth
- Computer/Internet
- Performance
- Track X (other sessions)

The official language of the conference will be English; however, sessions in Spanish are encouraged and other languages will be considered. If you would like to present your session in a language other than English, please include that information in your proposal.

The deadline for proposals is February 1, 1998. For more information please write to:

IBC5 Call for Papers
P.O. Box 639
Cambridge MA 02140 USA

BINET USA ANNUAL MEETING AT IBC5

BiNet USA will be having its annual business meeting in conjunction with the 5th International Bisexual Conference. The meeting will be from 9am to 5pm-ish on Thursday, April 2nd at a site within walking distance from the conference site. Member and RO trainings will be integrated into the conference workshops, and there will be an RO/NC meeting on Saturday morning during the conference. There will also be a "Battle of the Bands" fundraiser Thursday night at 8pm.

Next issue will have business meeting registration forms, location detail, agenda, call for proposals, the works. So stay tuned. If you have any immedi-

ate logistical questions, contact Stephanie at <virago@slip.net>; if you have any content questions, contact Deb at <debraruth@aol.com>; or if you want to help with the fundraiser, contact Marcella at <quest15@juno.com>

Hotel discount information will be available as soon as possible. In the meantime a small number of beds are available at a Boston youth hostel. Price includes breakfast and real sheets (not just a sleep sack).

- ▼ \$19/night members
- ▼ \$22/night non-members (must say IBC5 group)

(BINET continued on page 21)

(GILL continued from page 1)

If you're wondering what "technical assistance" means, we came up with the following definition of technical assistance (TA). TA is a transactional process of providing support, skills and knowledge to an organization or individuals to help them increase their ability to identify, clarify and/or meet their goals and objectives. TA is the transfer of capability skills, information or concepts from the provider to the recipient. TA can include on-site consultation, training, workshops, conferences, and brokerage services or information dissemination.

TA is not financial assistance nor is it an evaluation of program performance. Rather, it is a joint venture of problem solving and program planning between the provider and the recipient with the full support of the sponsoring agency.

TA should accomplish the following:

- ▼ It should be a tool of policy
- ▼ It should focus on the specific need or problem faced by the recipient.
- ▼ It should be provided in a timely fashion
- ▼ It should offer solutions and recommendations that are realistic and can be carried out.

In this approach three entities or persons are identified. These are the principal actors or stakeholders in any system of technical assistance. They include: the Sponsoring Agency, the Provider, and the recipient. Take as an example the long-standing issues around the roles, training, resources and responsibilities of ROs (regional organizers). BiNet USA, in this case, would be the sponsoring agency, the provider would be the National Coordinators in the form of the BOOM (Bisexual Organizer Organizing Manual) and RO Training Manual and the recipients are the ROs.

A strong TA program must be guided by the principals that define the relationships between sponsoring agency, the provider and technical assistance recipient. These principals can be used to promote clear understanding as to where specific responsibilities lie and the ways in which parties will work together. Such agreement on principals is necessary because

TA is an extremely personal endeavor. Most TA relationships are not based on a momentary contract between recipient and provider. Either some third party funds the program or it is based on a voluntary arrangement. If the individual relationship between the provider and the recipient is not founded on trust, mutual respect and a sense of common purpose, the effort cannot be successful.

Throughout the technical assistance process coaching is provided; the effort is viewed as not being linear; and quality assurance is built into the process from the beginning to end.

LIST of TA PRINCIPLES:

TA

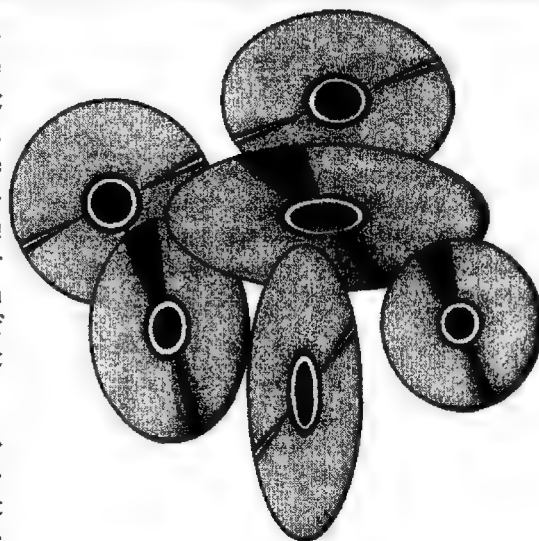
- ▼ is interactive;
 - ▼ must be appropriate for the culture, community, politics, size of group;
 - ▼ must have the right person giving right message;
 - ▼ can be focused on individuals and "change agents";
 - ▼ must be accessible as possible to recipients;
 - ▼ should have recipients partnered with provider (listening is part of TA);
 - ▼ needs to have a result which is empowering to others (both individuals and groups);
 - ▼ is competency-based; skill related; experiential;
- and quality assurance should be a conscious element of all phases of TA.

These principles all contribute to a strong program of TA. They reflect some of the realities inherent in the TA process – realities that set the TA environment part from other forms of consulting and management assistance that a sponsoring agency might offer.

The practice of providing TA should contain the following steps:

- ▼ Needs Assessment
- ▼ Priority Setting
- ▼ Develop Action Plan Throughout: Coaching
- ▼ Implementation Not Linear
- ▼ Evaluation
- ▼ Quality Assurance
- ▼ Follow-up

BiNet USA as an organization has a real opportunity in using this model to help get communities and organizations the resources and technical assistance they need. I believe this model can be used by BiNet USA and other bisexual organizations regionally and locally to better access communities' needs in conjunction with the actual community they are working with. I also believe it will help all of us whether we are sponsors, the provider, or the recipients to become more accountable to each other and the community. It also gives the bisexual community an opportunity to work in creative and resourceful ways as both recipient and provider to non-bisexual specific organizations.



LIFE on the Move

By Roland Sintos Coloma

(Major portions of this article are reprinted from Eric Astacaan's press release. Eric is a LIFE Legislative Advocate.)

On November 22 and 23, 1997, the House of Delegates of LIFE: California's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and HIV/AIDS Lobby, met in San Francisco. The House of Delegates, representing over 70 organizations, serves as the policy making body of this statewide coalition. After successful transgender and bisexual diversity training, LIFE changed its tagline to be more inclusive of bisexuals and transgendered people. BiNet USA became its first (and currently only) bisexual organization when it joined LIFE in May 1997. Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom (BALIF) generously serves as BiNet USA's angel, financing its first year membership dues, and California Latina/o Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Organization (LLEGO) is BiNet USA's delegate buddy. At the November meeting, the House introduced its first trans organization, FTM International, and elected BiNet Regional Organizer Roland Sintos Coloma into its Board of Directors.

In addition, LIFE's House set the 1998 Priorities for HIV/Healthcare and Civil Rights. LIFE's top five priorities for HIV/Healthcare advocacy are: AIDS budget; HIV Prevention / Education / Harm Reduction / Risk Management; HIV Testing / Surveillance / Reporting / Criminalization; Access to Healthcare / Healthcare Reform; and Public / Private Benefits. Meanwhile, the top five priorities for Civil Rights advocacy are: Transgender Hate Violence Act; LGBTQ Youth Rights and Education; Marriage / Domestic Partners and Adoption / Custody / Visitation; and Coalition Work on Affirmative Action / Immigration / Welfare / Employment.

The positions and priorities adopted by the House of Delegates will guide the public policy agendas for this California organization in 1998. LIFE Lobby hopes

that the discussion surrounding any change in the national or state policy positions will include a more inclusive community involvement.

LIFE'S POSITION ON HIV SURVEILLANCE, REPORTING AND TESTING (approved by House of Delegates, November 1997)

It has become increasingly true that, with the advent of new therapies, people with HIV are progressing less often to an AIDS diagnosis. Therefore, the primary manner in which the epidemic is currently monitored — through AIDS case counting — has become less accurate in capturing the overall picture of the prevalence of the epidemic. The AIDS community has long held a position of opposition to HIV case reporting, particularly by name, due to a well-founded and documented deterrent effect on the acceptance of HIV testing because of the fear of AIDS-based discrimination. This concern continues to date.

Recently, political pressure has substantially increased to specifically create a federal name-based registry of people with HIV and public health officials have called for development of a national standard of state or locally based HIV reporting of names. We believe that community involvement is essential in any discussion regarding the changing of national policy positions. Thus, LIFE Lobby takes the following positions with regard to the monitoring of the HIV epidemic:

1) HIV Surveillance

After careful assessment of the need for reliable HIV data in order to better track the epidemic, LIFE Lobby cautiously supports improving our AIDS surveillance system by including HIV case counting/surveillance. We do not believe that any particular system of reporting is indicated by the science of the epidemic. Data gathered through HIV case reporting must be provided to community planning bodies for use in prevention, care planning and resource allocation. However, the purpose of HIV surveillance and reporting is not to link individuals to treatment; HIV

surveillance does not expand access to treatment services.

2) HIV Reporting

LIFE Lobby vigorously opposes the reporting of HIV cases by name. We do not support efforts to develop a federal, state or local name-based registry of people with HIV; we do not support changing the national standard with regard to HIV name-based reporting; and we would not support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in promoting name-based HIV reporting to the states. Instead, we support the use of systems that respect and protect confidentiality and privacy, such as those that use unique or coded identifiers. HIV reporting does not automatically link individuals to treatment services and the method of reporting does not determine linkage to treatment. Prior to the implementation by the states of any system of HIV surveillance, significant and enforceable confidentiality and anti-discrimination protections must be in place, including strong civil and criminal penalties for breaches of confidentiality. The CDC must condition HIV surveillance funding on the establishment and expansion of such state laws. LIFE Lobby also supports the establishment of federal privacy and anti-discrimination protections.

3) Anonymous Testing

The option of accessible anonymous testing needs to be supported and funded regardless of any change in our national system of HIV/AIDS surveillance. Anonymous testing must be improved, expanded and available in all states and localities. The CDC must actively encourage this option by mandating wide availability of anonymous test sites as a condition of all HIV Prevention Cooperative Agreements, particularly if any type of national HIV surveillance is implemented.

4) HIV Counseling and Testing

LIFE Lobby supports the encouragement of voluntary, non-coercive, accessible HIV testing with informed consent, accompanied by client-centered, culturally competent, risk reduction-oriented HIV prevention counseling services in both public and private settings by individuals

(LIFE continued on page 21)

VisiBility in the Legislature

BiNet USA Takes on our Civil and Human Rights

By Deb Kolodny

In the fall of 1996, GenderPAC, a new coalition of many organizations (including BiNet USA) decided to lobby Congress in Washington, DC regarding ENDA [the Employment Non-Discrimination Act], GID [gender identity disorder] and other issues of concern to bisexual, transgendered and intersexed peoples. As reported in the Winter 1997 issue of *BiNet News*, GenderPAC director Riki Wilchins worked with Nancy Buermeyer of the Human Rights Campaign to set up several meetings with strong legislative supporters of ENDA to see if those legislators would be well disposed towards adding transgender protection to the Bill. BiNet USA joined in this historic lobbying effort last winter; I was our representative and following is some of the progress of the past year.

The day was well worth our effort; Capitol Hill staffers became familiar with GenderPAC and BiNet USA, and, of course, with bisexual, transgender and intersexed issues. However, the strong consensus on Capitol Hill was that ENDA's chance of passage was precarious and that adding coverage of transgendered people would only further endanger the bill.

That day also marked the beginning of a relationship between HRC [the Human Rights Campaign] and BiNet USA. In January of 1997, three national coordinators (myself, Kris Roehling and then-national-coordinator Alexei Guren) spoke with HRC regarding the direction of our relationship and the opportunities for working together. There were several positive results from that meeting. First, the level of awareness regarding inclusion of bisexual people and interests was raised to the point where HRC included bisexuals in the television advertisement which they aired during the coming out episode of "Ellen" and in some of their materials. In June, a briefing was conducted with HRC staff covering the basic informa-

tion on bisexuality used to dispel bisexual myths and stereotypes. There was further discussion about the ways in which bisexual civil rights can be targeted in the same way as lesbians and gays and how BiNet USA works to combat that discrimination. Finally, HRC and BiNet USA strategized over several months to create a joint campaign to educate up to twenty five congressional representatives and senators on bisexuality. David Grenham, a second BiNet USA lobbyist, and I pulled together a legislative packet focusing on what bisexuality is, on what BiNet USA is, and on the anti-bisexual rhetoric which has been used in legislative debates, countered by the facts and realities of bisexuality.

In October, during the week before ENDA was going to hearing in Committee, David and I and representatives of HRC (who set up the meetings for us) met with the offices of Senators Kennedy (D, Massachusetts), Mikulski (D, Maryland), Reed (D, Rhode Island), and Wellstone (D, Minnesota.). We were received incredibly well in each of the offices as we asked our allies in Congress to educate those who would put bigoted untruths into the public record as they bash bisexuals in an effort to defeat this critical legislation. The committee hearing went very

smoothly. No one opposed to the passage of the bill spoke. As it turned out, our allies had no immediate opportunity to use their new found knowledge about bisexuality. As ENDA and other legislation either supporting or attacking the civil and human rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgendered people proceeds, opportunities to set the record "straight" (so to speak) will surely arise.

David and I will continue our visits to the Hill, supported by HRC, and will also continue attending the "Queer Lobbyist" meetings hosted by HRC, where we discuss current legislative activity of interest to the queer community with other queer lobbyists.

(BINET continued from page 18)

The hostel is located at 12 Hemenway Street in Boston just 2 blocks from the Hynes/Auditorium subway stop on the Green Line and the #1 bus (which goes directly to Harvard). Reservations: (617) 536-9455. The desk is open 24 hours.

Travelers must specify authorization #A4348UJ when making flight reservations to qualify for the discount. Reservations may be made through your local travel agent or by calling the American Airlines meeting services desk at 1-800-433-1790. Travel dates must fall during the period March 30 thru April 8, 1998

(LIFE continued from page 20)

who are professionally trained in HIV transmission and psycho-social issues. Individuals should be linked to easily accessible, appropriate and adequately funded systems of care through counseling and testing programs. We are adamant in our opposition to attempts at controlling the HIV epidemic through a mandatory testing approach.

5) Partner Notification

We support voluntary, confidential, non-coercive, client-centered partner notification programs, with the utmost protection of privacy. However, partner notification must not be linked to any

HIV surveillance system; HIV surveillance will not in any way improve our partner notification efforts.

For more information about LIFE, contact: LIFE: California's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & HIV/AIDS Lobby, 1301 H Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-1906. Phone: (916) 444-0424. Fax: (916) 444-3059. E-Mail: life.info@lifelobby.org. Website: <http://www.lifelobby.org>

To represent your issues or concerns to LIFE and/or to the CA state assembly, contact Roland Sintos Coloma at: Voicemail: 626-916-1340. E-mail: <rosincol@bigfoot.com>

A National Coordinator's job is never done

By Deb Kolodny

... or so it seems. Life since the June, 1997 annual meeting has been full here in Washington DC for this NC.

Treasury

Taking over the Treasury job started with a bang, as I:

- Opened up an international account to create a place for people to put their donations for the International Bisexual Conference Travel Fund.
- Filed our 1997 501c3 papers with the State of Florida
- Transferred the paperwork from our former treasurer over to myself and Stephanie Berger as the co-signatories
- Began putting out monthly budget reports for the sextet and other national budget folks
- Sat on the budget committee which has created a proposal to be presented at this coming year's annual meeting (thanks for leading the charge on the budgeting count, Marcella)
- And of course, made deposits and wrote checks.

Everyone should be happy to know that we are financially healthy (in the black), but we are also living on the good graces of our hard working volunteers. While most organizations fund travel and lodging for their leaders to attend meetings, BiNet has a very small travel fund and has only been able to subsidize a few folks for very little money.

This year, as always, our biggest ticket item is the publishing and distribution of our quarterly newsletter. Thanks to an anonymous and generous donor, however, those expenses are being covered for a full year. This one restricted donation has allowed BiNet USA to operate in the black for this year and to have some money saved for a rainy day. Those rainy day items we hope to fund before the next annual meeting include the distribution of the Rural Organizing Initiative's Kit, the Bisexual Organizers Organizing Manual (the BOOM), and the Bi Youth Initiative's funding requests, among others.

Next year, you can expect big changes in both our income and our expenditures as we look for the first time to secure large donors and apply for grants. If all goes well, we hope to be able to fund travel for our officers (ROs and NCs) to events like Creating Change, our annual meeting and the Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and also to conduct rural organizing. We also would fund the newsletter and a part time administrative employee to take care of our voice mail, our postal mail, our membership outreach, and various resource materials. In addition to the BOOM and the Rural Organizing Kit, we also maintain our press kit and we have a new legislative packet. We will also be developing materials for our upcoming collaboration with GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network). With no end in sight to the photocopying, mailing and clearinghouse responsibilities for BiNet USA, we are in need of some office support.

Not Going Postal

I am happy to report that we have delegated out several of the PO Box jobs. Thanks a huge bunch to Ann Schranz for sending "Hellos" to new members, managing the database of members, and answering requests for information. GO ANN! Thanks to Ann also for answering our voice mail, which is a job which had lain dormant for over a year. If you run into this woman, you might consider kissing her feet or anything else she asks you to kiss (I know that she is blushing now but I can't help myself. I feel so blessed to have her helping us out.).

A Legislative Presence

Since February of 1996 I have been responsible for building a legislative presence

within BiNet USA. You didn't know that was happening, did you? We really need to toot our own horn more, eh? For the first time in its history, BiNet USA has taken on the challenge of lobbying the United States Senate and House of Representatives. (See *VisiBility in the Legislature*, page 21, for details). We were also a hair's breath away from attending the White House Conference on Hate Crimes. BiNet USA is not yet a member of the Hate Crimes Coalition due to our own inability to staff the work of participation. This is something that should be changed by the next time this publication goes to press. My name, however, was submitted to the White House as a representative of BiNet USA through our allies at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Thanks to Helen Gonzalez, a wonderful ally, and a great friend to our communities for making sure we were on the potential list of invitees. I was moments away from being invited, as I got a call for my fax number from the organizers of the event, but alas and alack, we didn't make the final cut.

Liaison with GLSEN

After the 1997 BiNet USA annual meeting, Roland Sintos Coloma, Bi Youth Initiative leader extraordinaire, Marcella Bucknam and I embarked on a mission to build a coalition with GLSEN. We established eleven goals, focusing on building both a national relationship and a local relationship between our regional and local organizers and their chapters. Our hope is to educate the educators about bisexuality, to share resources effectively to accomplish that goal, and to make schools safe for all children, regardless of sexual orientation. Who better than Roland, an educator himself, me, the daughter of a public school teacher and a consultant to one state's school system, and Marcella, to take this challenge on. Roland has made successful first contact with GLSEN. They are happy to work with us, and Marcella and I followed up in person at the recent National Gay and Lesbian (and Transgender and Bisexual) Task Force's Creating Change conference with Kate Frankfurt, GLSEN's Director of Advocacy. Things are moving forward beautifully.

Classifieds



National Resources

International Directory of Bisexual Groups now available!!!

Edited by Robyn Ochs and published by the Bisexual Resource Center, this issue has new listings and includes bisexual and lesbian/gay/bisexual groups in 18 countries and over 40 states. You can get your copy by sending \$11.95 to BRC, PO Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140

Funding

The Bisexual Advisory Board of CA Institute of Contemporary Arts (C.I.C.A.) announces that grants (\$200 to \$1,500) are available for projects related to bisexuality, for example: publications, academic research, seed money for new Bi organizations, community outreach projects, etc.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and will be reviewed every 4 months. Send for application to: Bi Adv. Board, C.I.C.A., 4545 Park Boulevard, # 207, San Diego, CA 92116, USA

Personals

Bi Latina, 29, poet, artist, singer/songwriter interested in writing to Bi men and women to talk about art, blues and who we are. If you are sincere and witty please write: Ellisa S. Gutierrez, 1153 W Magnolia Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92411

Classified AD Information and Guidelines

These classified ads are published free to BiNet USA members, and are placed on an "available space" basis. Ads other than those in the Organizations section will be published in one (1) issue and then automatically deleted unless renewed by the advertiser. Ads may be placed in one of several categories: **National Resources, Personals, Prison Pen Pals, Calls for Submissions, For Sale.** If your ad does not fit one of these categories, make a suggestion. All personal information will be held in confidence, with the exception of releasing mailing address or phone number as requested as part of the ad text.

BiNet News reserves the right to edit or reject any ad, and shall not be held responsible for any errors in publication. Ads which contain blatantly crude or sexist language will not be accepted.

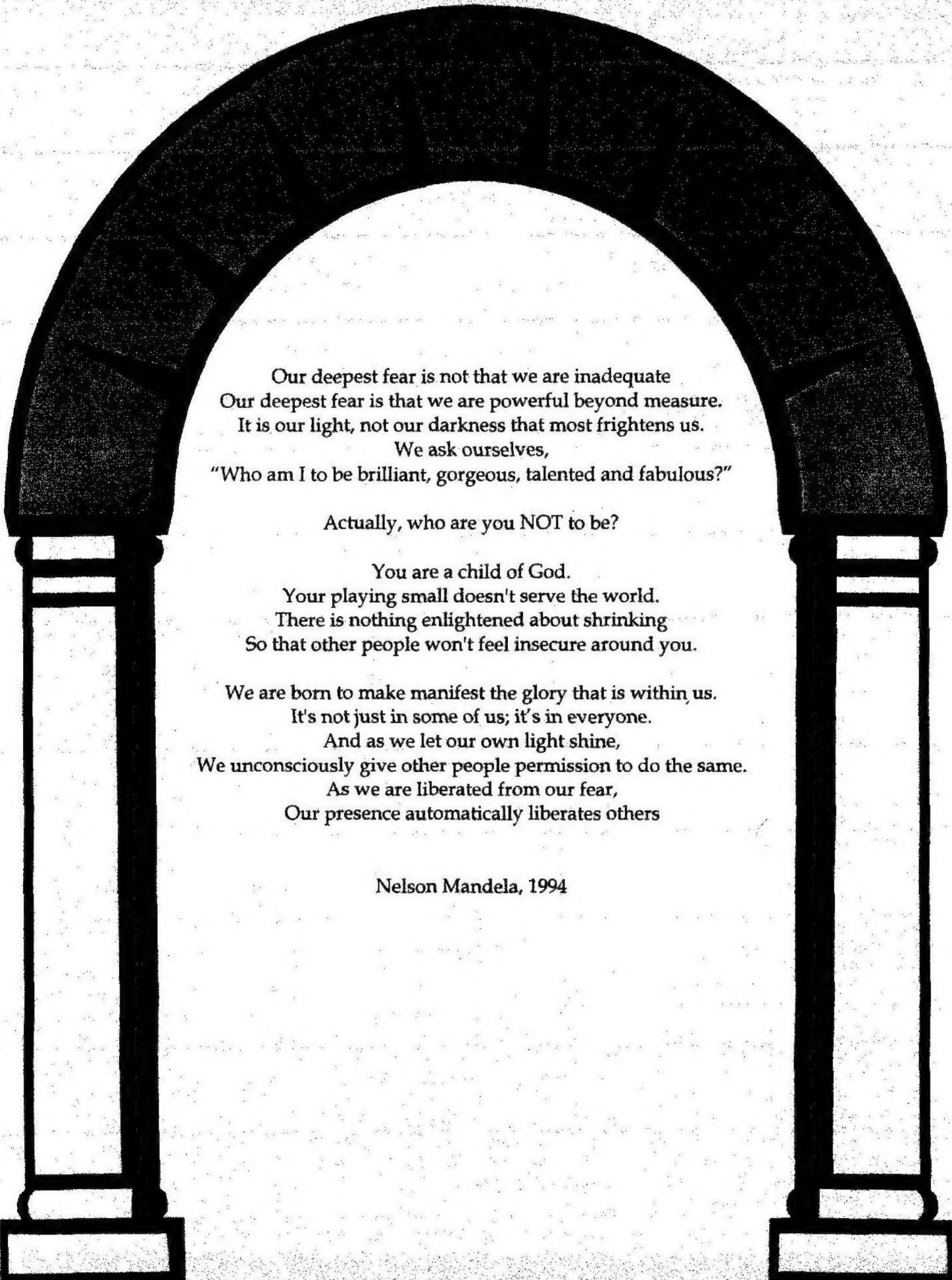
BiNet USA and/or *BiNet News* is not responsible for claims made in any advertisement. BiNet USA and/or *BiNet News* is not responsible for individual actions or behavior in the placement or response to any advertisement. So be smart when answering any advertisement.

Submissions

Fishnet, the on-line World Wide Web magazine of *Blowfish* (the mail-order erotica catalog), is looking for writing about sex. We are looking for non-fiction, fiction, and — if it's really, really good — poetry. Content can be straight, lesbian, gay, bi, trans, poly, SM, vanilla, whatever. Any topic having to do with sex, sexuality, gender, body image, and related issues will be considered. Fishnet is polymorphously perverse; as long as it's legal, we aren't picky. We're primarily looking for pieces of 750-1500 words. Payment ranges between \$25 and \$75 per piece, depending on length and various other considerations. You get an additional 50% if you take your pay in Blowfish products rather than cash. Submissions may be sent to Fishnet, c/o Blowfish, 2261 Market St. #284, San Francisco, CA 94114. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope, and indicate whether you want the copy returned. Submissions can also be faxed to (415) 282-1618, or e-mailed to <greta@blowfish.com>.

Prison Pen Pals

Incarcerated white male ISO a very special love, a caring person or persons who wish to get to know me. I'm Bi and am looking for the same, a couple or a single person who wants to be a couple. My age is 27, 6', 175lbs, Blk hair, Br. eyes. Soon to be released. Hays Glasscock #107193, Kentucky State Penitentiary, PO Box 128 6-A-10, Eddyville, KY 42038



Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves,
"Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?"

Actually, who are you NOT to be?

You are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
So that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are born to make manifest the glory that is within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.
And as we let our own light shine,
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our fear,
Our presence automatically liberates others

Nelson Mandela, 1994

Owen, Ron. "Binet News." BiNet News., fall, 1997-winter, 1998, p. [1]. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, link.gale.com/apps/doc/WSTHSS798155715/AHSI?u=ubcolumbia&sid=bookmark-AHSI. Accessed 30 Dec. 2024.